

SOZ): (a) and (b) The Steering Committee of Project Tiger met on 31st January, 1997 to discuss management, administrative and financial problems being faced by the Project Tiger areas. The main recommendations made by the Committee are:—

- (i) Re-structuring of financial procedure to facilitate smooth and quick fund flow to the field level.
- (ii) Exclusion of Tiger habitats from commercial developmental activities.
- (iii) Enhancement in the financial support to the State Governments for different tiger conservation activities.
- (iv) Approach the concerned authorities of State Governments to extend full support to protection efforts of tiger and tiger habitat.
- (v) Placement of adequate staff in Tiger Reserves and filling up of the existing vacancies.

(c) and (d) The flow of central funds to the field level is delayed due to different procedures adopted by the States. According to the records available in the Ministry, the defaulting states are Assam, Bihar and Orissa who have been requested to expedite release of funds immediately. The States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have not sent utilisation certificates for Pench and Tadoba Tiger Reserves against the release of first instalment of central assistance inspite of reminders.

Hostels for SC/ST Students

3751. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the financial assistance provided to the Government of Uttar Pradesh by the Central Government during 1995-96 for the construction of hostels for SC/ST students; and

(b) the number of new hostels constructed during the period in the State along with the assistance provided for each project?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) and (b) Under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Construction of Hostels for Scheduled Caste Boys and Girls, financial assistance is provided on 50:50 basis to the State Governments. Accordingly, this Ministry has released central share of financial assistance of Rs. 66,93,099/- for 11 SC Boys Hostel and Rs. 31,81,817/- for 5 SC Girls Hostel to the State of Uttar Pradesh during 1995-96. For ST Boys and ST Girls Hostel, no proposal was received from the State Government of Uttar

Pradesh for 1995-96 and hence no central assistance was released.

Palamau Tiger Reserve

3752. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'Palamu tiger reserve a den of criminals' appearing in the "Indian Express", dated 11 February, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken by the Government to control the deteriorating situation there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The presence of extremists in Palamau Tiger Project area has been reported, for which the State Government has been requested to take immediate appropriate steps to provide necessary assistance to the Field Director of the Reserve. A team comprising of members of Tiger Crisis Cell is also visiting the Reserve and the administrative authorities in Patna this month to resolve the issues.

Prices of Urea

3753. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to increase the prices of urea,

(b) if so, whether the prices of all the foodgrains are likely to be increased as a result thereof;

(c) whether the issue was discussed in the State Agriculture Ministers' Conference held in New Delhi on February 19, 1997; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) to (d) Yes Sir. Urea prices have been increasing by 10% w.e.f. 21.2.97. The concession on decontrolled phosphatic & potassic fertilisers is proposed to be increased w.e.f. 1.4.97 which will offset the impact of increase in prices of urea. Therefore, the cost of production of foodgrains is not expected to be increased due to nominal price increase in urea.

The State Agriculture Ministers' Conference was held on 19.2.97 to discuss Draft Agriculture Policy Resolution. In the Conference, it was re-emphasised that adequate and